



Speech By
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**RELATIONSHIPS (CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS) AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT
BILL**

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (12.55 pm): I rise today to speak in support of the Relationships (Civil Partnerships) and Other Acts Amendment Bill. This bill will restore the rights of adult couples regardless of their gender to have an official ceremony that acknowledges and celebrates their relationship. Love knows no gender. Discrimination against same-sex couples has to end and we must take more steps forward to ensure equality for all.

I appreciate that there are differing views on this issue within my electorate of Gladstone, but I consider that these changes are about fairness, equality and respect for the dignity of all members of our community. I support this bill wholeheartedly and, in doing so, I would like to share a story told directly from Jill, who works in my office: a mother, a wife and a good friend of mine. This is her story. She states—

At age 24 our daughter told us that she was dating a woman. Raised on a farm with her three siblings, educated at boarding school and with a big circle of rural friends.

You know what it's like when something comes out of left field right? We were shocked

Upon digesting her words, an early question to our daughter was 'What will your brother and sisters think'? She exclaimed 'They already know'. This was a way forward for me. They hadn't suddenly moved overseas, or gone to ground.

There were emotions of course. However, we are family, we love and support each other and nothing else really matters.

More conversations were ahead with extended family, friends and neighbours.

Of course being in a small farming community word spread quickly through the grape vine. The look on many locals faces.

Flabbergasted is the only word that comes to mind. With their stumbled words they tried to offer empathy and look for possible explanations.

Well it couldn't be anything in the water out there, this is our Kara, our first born.

Popular, loyal, fun loving, sporting, honest and hard-working like all other kids in our patch. Being gay was the unique difference.

When that right person comes into your child's life you just sense their happiness and their excitement—love changes everything. The words 'I'm engaged' were spoken in 2012.

A genuine commitment to another person for the rest of her life, I giggled nervously to myself, engaged, what does this mean in Australia? Every mother wants her little girl to have the fairy-tale wedding, a benchmark in her life to look back on.

You may think that witnessing the marriage of your daughter to her partner via skype from New York, USA on Jan 2nd 2013 would be enough.

What about inviting 183 guests to your front lawn, decked out exquisitely in a truly premier celebration on June 8 2013?

What about the fake certificate, stored in the album of your daughter and her partner, isn't that enough?

You may find this a little bit out of your comfort zone, but I proudly call the special person in my daughter's life, my daughter-in-law, because in my eyes that's what Kelly Anne is!

But right now she is just a Clayton's version, according to the law.

This beautiful human loves, respects and honours my girl. Isn't this what every mother wants for their child? So, isn't that enough?

I say no. No, it's not enough. I want to be able to say this lawfully, my daughter is legally united with her partner, the woman that she loves.

Our family deserves that dignity. That would be fair, right and just.

The best thing about history is the change it has invoked. Centuries ago these two people would have been killed, perhaps stoned to death.

Earlier last century they would have remained hidden with their secret and, if found out, persecuted, shunned and perhaps harmed.

But isn't evolution wonderful. This happy couple have their own home, a beautiful garden, a dog, a cat and neighbours who wave and look out for them.

They go out in public in our regional town without fear and soon they can celebrate their legal partnership.

In another century someone may be looking through our family tree. Prior to now they were going to find a spinster and exclaim, I wonder why she never married.

With a civil partnership certificate registered in the files of history, someone in the future is going to be saying—Oh my gosh! Look at that, she was united with a woman.

So this is the story of the travel consultant and the fashion designer, they found happiness and love, and now the promise of a legally recognised partnership, the fairy-tale ending every mother wants.

That's the story I want written into history.

As the member for Gladstone, that is the story I want written not only for Jill, her daughter and her partner, but also for the electorate of Gladstone and the whole of Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.